



NEWS RELEASE

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Santa Monica Man to Stand Trial for Kidnapping at UCLA Campus

A 43-year-old man pleaded not guilty today after being ordered to stand trial for allegedly carjacking and kidnapping a man waiting for his wife outside of the UCLA Public Health building, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Jason Levi Garza (dob 2/5/74) of Santa Monica was arraigned today after being held to answer on June 28 for one count of kidnapping for carjacking, carjacking with a firearm, kidnapping, criminal threats and assault with a firearm.

The felony information in case SA094170 also alleges Garza was convicted of second-degree robbery in 2011.

Deputy District Attorney Maria Ghobadi said the defendant is scheduled back for a pretrial hearing on Aug. 10 in Department W81 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Airport Branch.

On Oct. 3, 2016, Garza allegedly kidnapped the victim at gunpoint, ordered him to drive to a second location and then forced the victim into the vehicle's trunk, the prosecutor said. According to testimony at the preliminary hearing, the defendant drove around for more than six hours before releasing the hostage in a desolated area of Castaic.

The victim was able to get help after walking for about 1 1/2 hours to a freeway call box, the prosecutor added. Garza was tracked down and arrested on Oct. 13, 2016.

The defendant faces a possible maximum sentence of life in state prison with the possibility of parole if convicted as charged. Bail is set at more than \$2.1 million.

The case remains under investigation by the University of California Police Department.

About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.